

Top Secret

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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

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Information as of 1600
18 January 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Another large underground complex of caves and tunnels has been uncovered by elements of the 23-battalion allied Operation CEDAR FALLS in Binh Duong Province (Para. 1). A battalion-size Communist force was engaged by two ARVN battalions northwest of Quang Tri city; three ARVN soldiers were killed and 36 wounded in a six-hour encounter (Para. 2). Two South Vietnamese positions were attacked by the Viet Cong in the Mekong Delta area on 18 January (Paras. 3-4). Thirty B-52s dropped incendiary bombs in an attempt to destroy foliage in a forested area near War Zone "D" (Para. 5). South Vietnamese authorities have recently apprehended a number of Viet Cong agents (Para. 6-7).

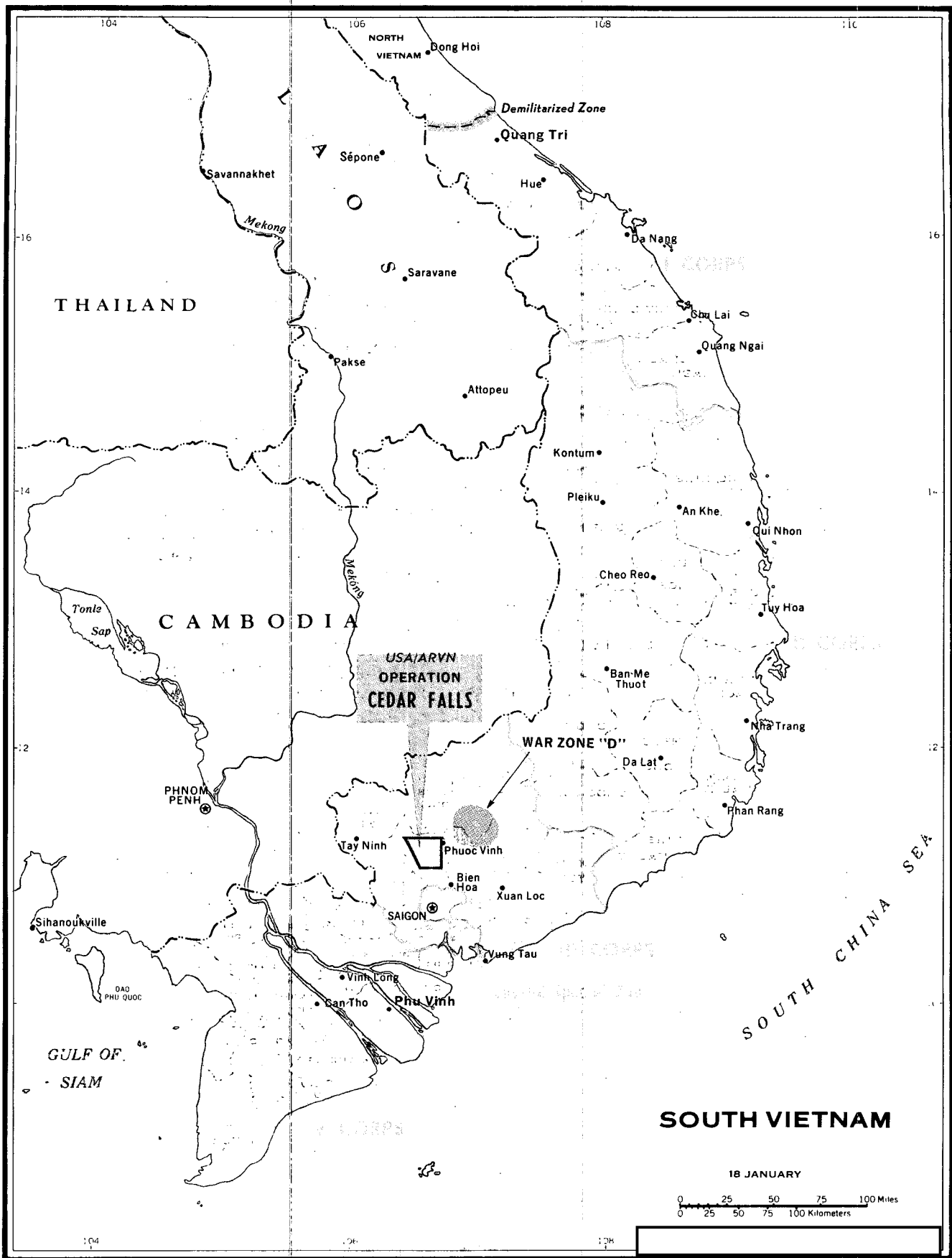
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III. North Vietnamese Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. In the Iron Triangle area of Binh Duong Province elements of the 23 allied battalions now participating in Operation CEDAR FALLS have uncovered a second large underground complex of caves and tunnels. This underground facility may possibly be the headquarters of the Viet Cong's Military Region IV, one of the major targets of this operation. A 60-mm. mortar, four machine guns, and 78 individual weapons were found in the initial search of the area, which was heavily mined and booby-trapped. Casualties for this 12-day-old sweep operation are 52 Americans killed and 250 wounded compared with over 500 Viet Cong killed and 80 captured. The allies have detained 428 suspects.

2. Two South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) battalions engaged as estimated battalion-size enemy force about five miles northwest of Quang Tri city in northernmost Quang Tri Province on 17 January. Sixteen allied tactical air strikes supported the friendly forces. Three ARVN soldiers were killed and 36 wounded as a result of a six-hour battle. Enemy losses are unknown.

3. Early on 18 January, a Communist force of unknown size attacked a town in the Mekong Delta about 140 miles southwest of Saigon. The town--the location of which is still unreported--was defended by 80 Popular Force troops and an artillery platoon. US armed aircraft flew missions in support of the defenders. Preliminary reports show 16 South Vietnamese killed, 54 wounded, and ten missing. Communist casualties are unknown. Three ARVN battalions have begun a reaction operation, but no contact with the enemy has been reported.

4. Also on 18 January, a South Vietnamese Popular Force outpost near Phu Vinh in the delta province of Vinh Binh was attacked and overrun by a Viet Cong force of undetermined size. Nine of the post's defenders were killed. Friendly artillery and US aircraft provided support to the South Vietnamese unit. Four ARVN battalions have been dispatched as a reaction force, but no contact has yet been reported.

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B-52 Incendiary Raid Near War Zone "D"

5. Thirty Guam-based B-52 bombers struck a target area about 46 miles northeast of Saigon in Binh Duong Province on 18 January. The strike target is on the fringe of the Iron Triangle and near the Communist redoubt known as War Zone "D." This mission was designed to determine techniques and conditions required to destroy large areas of forest or jungle growth by fire and may have been timed to hit concentrations of Communist troops reportedly fleeing from Operation CEDAR FALLS. An incendiary type bomb was employed--each bomb consisting of a cluster of 57 small bombs filled with crude oil. Ground follow-up by US Special Forces teams is planned to ascertain results of this mission.

Capture of Viet Cong Agents

6. In early December 1966, the Special Branch of South Vietnamese National Police apprehended a Viet Cong communications-liaison agent on his way into Saigon from Nha Be to the south. Exploitation of this prisoner has led to the arrest of a member of the Viet Cong's Current Affairs Committee who was concurrently chief of the Labor Section of the Viet Cong Cho Lon - Saigon - Gia Dinh Special Zone (also called Military Region IV) and also 25 members of the special zone labor section. These arrests have probably neutralized this labor section.

7. Other important members of the Viet Cong special zone apprehended in the last four months include a special operations platoon leader, a member of the propaganda and training section concurrently in charge of the youth group of Binh Tan District, a member of the Go Mon security section, and a member of the special zone Liberation Front committee's journalist section.

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